**Equine Assisted Therapy at Eliada FAQs**

**Who can sign up?**

Equine Therapy can serve students who meet the following criteria:

* 12-21 years of age
* Students of all races, religions, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, genetic information, disability or national origin.
* Is capable of developing skills to manage symptoms, make behavioral changes, and respond favorably to therapeutic interventions
* At risk background (placements and services in the Foster Care/Child Welfare and Mental Health systems)
* Prior or current histories of behavioral, psychological, or biological needs and issues.
* Other harmful or disruptive behaviors/symptoms

The following will be evaluated on an individual applicant basis to determine if Equine Therapy is the appropriate service for the applicant:

* History of mental health illness including prior placements/services
* Presenting mental health diagnosis/symptoms
* Recent psychiatric hospital placements
* Other harmful or disruptive behaviors/symptoms

**What insurance do we accept?**

Medicaid and Private pay at this time

**How much does it cost?**

$150 a session

**How many sessions do I need?**

We do a treatment plan for 8-10 sessions initially, but will re-evaluate at the end of this time and if more sessions are needed. Then we will do a new treatment plan and move forward with those goals.

**Do we do family sessions?**

Yes, we can do family sessions. We will bill or pay at the same rate if family sessions are needed.

**What is the cancellation policy?**

We need a 24 hour notice for cancellation. No shows will still be responsible for the cost of the session.

**Why do you need an equine specialist in a therapy session?**

The equine specialist adheres to the same confidentiality standards as any other therapist. The equine specialist is there to observe the horses and help maintain physical safety for the client and horses. The clinician and the equine specialist work together to observe the session and help provide physical and emotional safety.

**Do we ride the horse?**

No, all sessions occur on the ground. There is no riding.

**Do I need horse experience?**

No, no previous experience with horses is necessary. All you need is a willingness to be open and present.

**What if I am scared of horses?**

It is OK to be scared of horses, it might be part of your process. If the fear is debilitating and you do not want to try to work with them then this might not be the right type of therapy for you. You can do what you need to do to feel safe, you will never be forced to directly interact with a horse in any way. You do not necessarily have to touch them to learn from them.

**What should I wear?**

Closed toed shoes are mandatory. We do have some boots that can be borrowed if you forget but may not have the correct size and we do not provide socks.

You should dress for the weather. Sessions are outdoors. In the summer, be sure to wear sunscreen and bug spray and a hat. Long pants are recommended. The flies do bite and shorts can be uncomfortable. In the winter, you will want to dress in layers and be sure to have whatever you need to stay warm. We also have some winter coats available to borrow but may not have the correct size.

**What if it rains?**

We conduct sessions rain or shine unless the weather is severe. If severe weather is expected you will receive a call from the treatment team to determine if we need to reschedule. Sessions can be conducted inside the barn or under a shed in the field.

**What does a session look like?**

Every session is different and individualized based on the participant’s goals and process. The horses respond differently to different people at different times. There is no right or wrong way to have a session. Once applications and intake paperwork are completed, the participant will meet the horses and treatment team in the barn. Participant will work with treatment team during the first session to establish a safety plan for what they can do when they feel unsafe. The horses are often loose and free to roam around and be themselves during sessions. The treatment team will often be a small distance from the client to allow the client to experience the horses in their own way. The participant can ask the team to move at any time or can approach the team at any time if they need support or feel unsafe in any way. Processing can occur anytime within the session. Some people check in throughout a session and others like to wait until the end. There is no right or wrong. It is important to know that working with horses does not always mean that every session is fun. Therapy and learning can be really hard work. Tough stuff is going to come up. Sometimes people can get really frustrated, angry or sad when these things come up. Therapy is a process.

**Can I be accompanied or have a friend?**

Equine assisted psychotherapy sessions should be treated as any other therapy session. If you have a friend or companion with you, they may wait in the designated waiting area for your session to be finished.

**Can I bring my dog?**

No, personal dogs are not allowed on campus. They will need to stay home or in your vehicle

**Can I volunteer with the horses or visit them?**

In order to maintain confidentiality and privacy for all of our clients we ask that you do not visit the horses outside of your regularly scheduled session times. If you are interested in working with horses outside of therapy or learning horsemanship, we are happy to refer you to some other great programs in the community that may suit your needs.